

One could easily dismiss my statement as coming from someone who is only marginally affected by the abuse that I would purport to stop. However, although there are no Sinclair-run stations in my viewing area, I cannot squander the opportunity to share with you what I feel is both an abuse of power and an abuse of the public airwaves.

The decision by Sinclair Broadcasting to force their stations to air documentary critical of one political candidate prior to the November election is a clear example of what I would consider to be the dangers of corporate media consolidation.

Corporations such as Sinclair are getting larger and larger, while smaller stations and new entities are being swallowed up in the process. What is the purpose of this consolidation other than to further the financial gain of one already large conglomerate? Does this truly serve in the public interest?

This is supposedly the duty of television stations utilizing public airwaves, but do you truly feel that this duty is being carried out in this case?

I was curious when I heard about this dilemma, because I had been paying

attention to the aggregation of large media assets in our country for some time. This phenomenon is not at all isolated to this country, as more and more local stations are being assimilated by multi-national corporations such as News Corporation and Vivendi. Does this alarm anyone else besides a select few of us who happen to pay attention to this sort of thing?

When a corporation such as Sinclair consistently forces its stations to relinquish control of their own journalistic staffs and replace them with standardized broadcasting, that fact alone would be somewhat unsettling.

However, it may be necessary to support whatever cost structure that they might have in place.

It is far more unsettling however, to find a company using public airwaves to broadcast what all but the most hardened partisan would be considered to be opinionated commentary, rather than objective journalism, with the sole motivation behind such "reporting" to influence the minds of viewers in order to gain support for one particular political candidate.

Probably what is most distasteful is that this supposed reporting comes not from the mouth of a journalist, but

rather from
Sinclair's Vice
President for
Corporate Relations,
Mark Hyman.

With this being
said, I recognize
that Sinclair has
the right to
broadcast anything
it wishes on its
privately-owned
stations. The
equation changes,
however, when they
utilize public
airwaves to further
their own interests.

The cycle begins
with them using
their influence
inappropriately to
support a particular
candidate who is
sympathetic to media
consolidation, who,
once elected, allows
them to become even
larger, thus
allowing them to
continue their
already questionable
business practices
untethered. The
cycle then
continues. It is
perfectly legal for
Sinclair executives
to contribute
heavily to
Republican
candidates with
their own dollars,
which they have been
documented as doing
almost exclusively.

That is part of the
American electoral
system. It is
another matter
entirely for them to
exert undue
influence on the
electoral process by
utilizing public
airwaves to further
their own political
and financial gain.

At some point it
becomes the
responsibility of
officials such as
yourselves charged

with protecting the public good to break the chain of greed and self-interest in regards to corporate media. While I realize that media consolidation is somewhat inevitable in this media-centric world we live in, it is at the same time increasingly necessary to impose didactic scrutiny on those entities that so shape our perceptions and opinions.

Sinclair is entitled to utilize public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, rather than weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a token stamp of approval.

Thank you for your time and consideration of my comments. It is truly a great country that we live in, and because of that we must remain ever vigilant to protect our freedoms. I hope that the FCC will make the right decision.